EDITORIAL - SPECIAL ARTICLES
AUTOMOBILES

New York Tribune

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PART III EIGHT PAGES — SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1918 — PART III EIGHT PAGES

HEARST'S WORK FOR A FIGHTLESS WAR

By Kenneth Macgowan

WHAT would America's share in the Great War be to-day if William Randolph Hearst and his editors had been in charge at Washington? His papers make the answer plain.

Suppose that the Hearst editorials had been Congressional bills.

Suppose that Hearst had written messages to Congress instead of "personal and private letters of instruction" to his editors.

Suppose, first, that America—under Hearst—could be at war with Germany.

If these suppositions were facts, then:—

The citizens of the United States, under universal military training, would be marshalled on the Atlantic and Pacific seaboards and along the Mexican border. We should have kept our army at home to "defend America." We should have kept our army at home to defeat Germany by operations "at our natural base." We should have kept our army at home because we believed in "America first!"

We should have placed beside "our beloved ally, France," at Amiens just one fighting unit, the Roosevelt volunteers.

Half our navy would be cruising the Pacific, and the rest anchored in home waters.

We should have lent no money to the Allies, leaving them to rely on what Hearst has called their "bankrupt" credit.

We should have made no effort to provision the Allies. We should have made no sacrifice that food might win the war.

We should have built no ships to "feed the maw of the submarines."

We should have bent our industrial and military energies in two directions. We should have built a large fleet of submarines for defence. And we should have relied on defeating Germany by a gigantic air offensive, after the necessary two to five years of preparation.

That is all—as regards Germany.

But we should undoubtedly be fighting Mexico, probably Japan, and possibly Britain.

A "Paper War" Made by Newspapers

Hearst's whole attitude toward America's participation in the war is summed up in one short statement: When America hesitated on the brink Hearst declared that the struggle would be no "paper war." After America accepted Germany's challenge Hearst consistently advocated measures which would have made it one.

If that is a short statement it is also a very grave statement. It carries serious implications. It bares terrible possibilities.

The gravity of the charge which may be brought against Hearst and his newspapers has undoubtedly been a large factor in deterring people from grasping or crediting it. About as large a factor has been the Hearst camouflage. If he had succeeded in leading the country into this sort of war attitude it would have been to a hallelujah chorus of "America first!" and back-door patriotism.

What reader who saw in "The New York American" of April 4, 1917, the words:

> **"Let every energy be bent upon preparation for a powerful and wholly victorious war "**

would suspect Hearst of anything but herculean passion to roll Germany in the mud?

Perhaps the reader also saw in "The American" of May 17, 1917, the words:

> **"Our only correct strategy is to spend all our money and all our labor in preparing our navy and our armies HERE AT THEIR NATURAL BASE and so compelling Germany, if she wants to fight, to come to us and see how she likes the taste of OUR GRANITE."**

Action! But Not Against Germany

Contradictory as they were, the Hearst editorials of March, April and May, 1917, were astutely fitted to a confused and undirected period. Before war was declared they played upon our dislike of a long and serious war. Afterward they were diabolically clever in supplying busy ways of doing nothing and vigorous reasons for apathetic policies. They were not foolish enough to preach inaction toward Germany. When Hearst wished us not to do something he always gave us something to do. That was his policy from April 6, 1917, onward. He never urged us to refuse men, money and food to Europe without urging us equally to supply them bountifully to America. To reconcile us to not fighting Germany he posed Mexico and Japan as enemies.

Hearst began to recognize the trend of events early in March, 1917. He strove still to keep us out of war, but he began also to organize the campaign by which we might be kept relatively out of it, even though technically in it. Telling us that Germany was sure to win, he urged us to bide our time and make ready for her "terrible onslaught."

It was such an interesting notion to Hearst that he used it often. On March 12, 1917, "The American" said:

> **"The moment war is declared our adversaries will be ready to fight, but it will be a long time before we will be ready to fight. Why should we precipitate actual hostilities before we are ready to fight? The war may be serious."**

Wait Till the Allies Are Beaten

"The Evening Journal" struck the same note on April 18, 1917, when war was a fact:

> **"This cyclone may cross the ocean—this is the cyclone of war which has devastated Europe for nearly three years. We know its work there.**
>
> **"Between us and the rage of the cyclone stands the Atlantic Ocean. BUT THE CYCLONE HAS STARTED IN OUR DIRECTION.**
>
> **"We may need our men and our forces HERE AT HOME to meet this thing when it comes."**

Shortly before that date "The American" had begun to develop its theme of improving our chances of defeating Germany in the future by letting Germany defeat our allies now. On April 11, 1917, it said:

> **"Every shipment of food and military supplies from this time on IS A BLOW AT OUR OWN SAFETY. . . .**
>
> **"Now, our earnest suggestion to the Congress is that it imperatively refuse to permit the further drainage of our food supplies and our military supplies and our money supplies to Europe. We insist that none of these things, at this eleventh hour, when the huge armies are already locked in the final death grapple, can have any decisive effect, one way or the other, upon Europe's conflict.**
>
> **"If the Allies are to win, they will, and they MUST win with what preparedness they have, for all we can send them now cannot possibly change the result.**
>
> **"On the other hand, if the Teutons are about to win, we need every ounce of food and every ounce of preparedness, and ten times as much, right here at home, in order to meet that peril. . . ."**

With this idea that the fight was nearly over and that Germany would be the victor—for that is the unquestionable conclusion both from "The American's" previous estimates of the belligerents and from its insistence on preparations—grew two remarkable proposals for defeating Germany. One, already partially quoted, published on May 17, 1917, was the proposal to concentrate forces for war at "our natural base," the Atlantic seaboard. "The American" continued:

> **"The prime strategic advantage of this country in warfare with a European power is NOT a distant offensive against the enemy's base, but it is an offensive prepared and launched near and upon our own shores against an enemy compelled to leave his base and assault ours."**

This strategic principle, which Hannibal neglected in crossing the Alps, which Alexander ignored, which Cæsar disregarded, of which Napoleon and Grant seemed to know nothing, and which Germany forgot as she crossed Belgium, appears to be the first maxim of modern American military men—at least those of the spring of 1917. For "The American" continued:

> **"To throw away our strategic advantage by sending our fleets and armies away from their home base to be parts of a European offensive which has practically broken down is a blundering proposal that would make a real strategist gasp, and that will cost us dear if we accede to it. . . .**
>
> **"Our money, like our armies and our fleets, should be concentrated at its home bases and not dispersed abroad."**

This remarkable campaign, for which no temperate word is possible, received indorsement from "The Journal" on April 12, 1917, in the words:

> **"Practically the whole military staff is opposed to our sending troops across the water."**

Another product of the theory of staying out of the fight until your enemy has won came on April 13, 1917. It is needless to point out that, with the theory of inaction toward Germany, it linked a proposal for sinking a great deal of money and energy in the creation of a military arm which would be useless against Germany—unless she was victorious:

> **"We ought to build seagoing submarines as fast as money and labor can build them, until we have at least 500 of them in the water.**
>
> **"And then we could sit secure behind their powerful defence and wait for them to destroy our enemies' commerce and bleed their economic veins dry."**

At present writing it looks like a long wait.

Hearst's Triple Alliance—Germany, Mexico and Japan

While this campaign of "active inaction" was getting under way Hearst launched another for making sure that our troops stayed at home and to divert our thoughts from the disappointment of not fighting Germany. He discovered enemies nearer home. Hearst's natural interest in Mexico and the cattle ranches of Sonora turned his thoughts toward our southern neighbor, but he still had sufficient impartiality on March 8, 1917, even in the face of the Zimmermann exposure, to concede other foes as well:

> **"In less than a year we may be beset on the Atlantic and on the Pacific shore line by enemies . . . who are armed and desperately poor, while we . . . will be unarmed and hugely rich."**

The threat of invasion of the United States by Mexico, Japan and sundry other nations continued steadily in the Hearst papers. Varied with suggestions of invading Mexico by the United States, it persisted up to March 18, 1917. Here are a few specimens:

March 1, 1917: **"We may see our harvest reaped in peace. We may see them reaped behind the red lines where our best and bravest are dying to stem the flood of a triple invasion."**

March 23: **"If we strip our treasury of its cash and our navy and army of their strength to fight the Allies' war in Europe, nothing on earth will stop Japan and Mexico from striking us a fatal blow, while our only means of defence are being used up across the Atlantic."**

June 1: **"There is always a possibility of 'differences of opinion' between our country and Japan. There is never a let-up of probability of 'difficulties' with Mexico."**

June 26: **"We may have to wage the war alone against Germany, or against Germany and Russia, or against such a tremendous combination as Germany and Russia and Japan."**

Aug. 4 (from "The Evening Journal"): **"A pig for each Mexican? Good idea. The whole Mexican pig for Uncle Sam would be a better idea."**

Nov. 22: **"While we are interfering in Europe's quarrels to protect weak peoples, we should intervene in Mexico to protect the weak people there."**

Jan. 5, 1917: **"We do not know whether there is a danger of the Japanese joining with the Germans, which makes our government so considerate of Japan."**

Feb. 18: **"The situation in Mexico will never be solved until the United States does its full duty there, occupies and pacifies the country."**

March 4: **"We are marked for attack because we are in conflict with the Japanese financially and commercially, and in contrast with them politically and socially. . . . Any day the opening gun in the only important, the only vital war of the world . . . may be fired."**

Long before Hearst's supply of enemies threatened to run out, he had found two far better rallying cries for his campaign to keep our war forces at home. One was "America first!" the other, "Alien slackers!"

The "Alien slacker" campaign began in "The American" on May 14, 1917, with a straight attack on "propagandists" for England—50,000 of them—who had "preferred to stay in the United States and at this safe distance exercise their patriotic devotion to England . . . while we were at peace and presumably neutral."

Except for that telltale last phrase, the interesting point in this editorial is the fact that because "20,000 or 30,000 would be a great help in France to-day," "The American" thinks that rounding up and enlisting that number of "alien slackers" would somehow place them at the front about day after to-morrow.

Editorials on the "alien slacker" occurred in issues of "The American" for May 14, June 16, July 2 and 14, September 14 and 25, November 27, December 5 and 14, 1917; but that of June 16 is typical enough of them all:

"We Will Send Our Boys to Fight for England Only When England Has Rallied All Her Own"

> **"It is understood from English and American estimates that there are 500,000 English 'slackers' in this country. . . .**
>
> **"If this be true . . . the obligation resting upon our government is imperative and immediate. . . .**
>
> **"There is no reason on earth why these 500,000 English slackers should not be shipped straight to the fighting lines in Flanders before another American boy is sent across the seas. . . .**
>
> **". . . it is neither necessary nor right that the flower of our young American manhood should be sent as a sacrificial offering to the Red Moloch of slaughter while England has men enough to fight her own battles for many months ahead."**

"America First!"—Germany Second—The Allies a Bad Third

In 1917, before we had declared war, Hearst showed his clear opposition to helping the Allies against Germany. On March 23, "The American" said:

> **"This proposition that we shall finance the Allies and send our boys for cannon fodder is a Wall Street proposition and nothing else."**

After the declaration of war, "America first!" took its proper place in the bright lexicon of the war's delays, and the Hearst propaganda against effective prosecution of the war advanced behind a different sort of patriotic barrage. On April 11 "The American" said:

"Stripping Our Country of Men, Money and Food Is a Dangerous Policy"

> **"Every shipment of food and military supplies from this time on IS A BLOW AT OUR OWN SAFETY. . . .**
>
> **"We urge you not to weaken our country's preparedness, not to give away our money by shiploads, not to squander our men and our food reserves upon Europe. . . .**
>
> **"Gentlemen of the Congress, for our safety's sake, let us think of AMERICA."**

With War a Week Old

Two days later, on April 13, "The American" was applying "America first!" to loans abroad. It is significant that Hearst's editor here deliberately distorted the truth by talking of "giving" instead of "loaning," "spending" instead of "investing at interest."

> **"We must say that we think Congress should go slow in this matter of spending our money in such large sums for ALLIED preparedness.**
>
> **"We have American PREPAREDNESS to pay for. . . .**
>
> **"Neither do we think that many Americans . . . feel that we should pay the war costs of these nations in ADDITION TO OUR OWN. . . .**
>
> **"America first!"**

The "America first!" campaign to win the war by the policy of "hang your clothes on the hickory limb, but don't go near the water," continued up to February 15, 1918, when "The American" said:

> **"In transferring the blood of healthy America into dying Europe we do not want to do this to the extent of making America as sick as Europe.**
>
> **"While we are making the world safe for democracy, it is certainly our duty to keep America safe for democracy. . . .**
>
> **"Let us do all we can for Europe, but AMERICA FIRST!"**

Hearst Calls It Off

On June 29, 1917, the Hearst newspaper which had urged compulsory military service for many, many years, and which had repeatedly pictured Germany as already victorious and the Allied offensive as "practically broken down," came out with the following remarkable recantation. Can it leave any doubt of the purpose behind such propaganda?

"Further Service in the War Should Be a Matter of Choice for Americans"

> **"These papers have said consistently, and will continue to maintain, that the American soldiers who go to France should go as volunteers, and not as conscripted men sent by the will of the government.**
>
> **"This government now definitely knows that it has men enough to fight its battles now and in the future against Germany and against the world . . . and this assurance, definite and fixed by the registration, makes it possible now for the Republic to give free course to the volunteer system that it may be glorified among soldiers and vindicated among governments.**
>
> **"We believe that in the magnificent contribution our country has already made to the battlefields of the Western front of Europe, it has given ALL THAT THE NECESSITIES OF THE ALLIES OR THE SAFETY OF OUR OWN COUNTRY AT THIS TIME JUSTIFIES IT IN GIVING."**

It would be interesting to see Hearst—champion of compulsory service and prophet of German victory—explain all the varied points of that editorial. It would rival the famous spectacle of the chameleon that sat down on a piece of Scotch plaid.

Hearst Gets His Wires Crossed

As clear an exposure of Hearst's purposes by his own editors occurs in the matter of food as of men. On January 10, 1918, through "The Evening Journal," Hearst showed his usual enthusiasm for keeping our food supplies at home. On February 11, 1918, through "The American," he betrayed his equal enthusiasm for keeping those food supplies in neutral countries, in Germany, anywhere but in the countries of the Allies.

In the former case "The Journal" reprinted four news dispatches, which it said, demonstrated that food was cheaper and more plentiful abroad than in the United States. Part of the column of comment read:

> **". . . when the American people find that the European people have cheaper food and undergo less food restrictions than the American people, there is bound to arise a popular resentment and discontent WHICH WILL HAVE A BAD EFFECT UPON THE NATION'S ENTHUSIASM AND WARLIKE ENERGY.**
>
> **"Let the Allies have liberally all the aid we can spare WITHOUT IMPOSING GREATER HARDSHIPS UPON THE MASSES OF OUR OWN PEOPLE THAN THE MASSES ABROAD HAVE TO ENDURE—but let that be the limit.**
>
> **"Let us put America first."**

It is unnecessary to debate the truth of "The Journal's" statements. It is only necessary to point out that on February 11, 1918, a Hearst paper was urging the shipment of food to neutrals adjacent to Germany. "The American" of that date said:

> **". . . we feel impelled by a strong sense of duty and by a strong apprehension of danger to urge upon the government the wise policy of relaxing these food restrictions placed upon neutral countries."**

Food for Any One but the Allies

Wherever Hearst may have acquired the "strong sense of duty," his apprehension arose from the danger **"IMMINENT AND ACUTE,"** that the "hungry" people of Sweden and the "starving" people of Holland and Switzerland would join Germany in order to obtain food.

> **"They MUST HAVE FOOD, and if there is no other way to get food they will take food FROM GERMANY."**

Somehow one feels that the editor's pen slipped when he threw in those last capitals. Or perhaps it was only a printer with a new theory of how to win the war. Either way, the Hearst conclusion is clear:

> **"The right line of action is as plain as a pikestaff.**
>
> **"The Dutch ships should be released, loaded with food and sent to Holland."**

The same sort of contradiction occurred over Hearst's attempt to keep the full force of America's draft army at home by urging the acceptance of Roosevelt's volunteers.

"The American," arch-enemy of Roosevelt, consistently supported the ex-President's plea with many cartoons and much editorial language. Following up a pronouncement of May 12, 1917, "Let the Colonel Go to France," "The American" pointed one motive on June 10, by saying:

> **"Thousands of these registered fighting men of the country, willing to fight in their own country, do not wish to go to France . . . We do not know how soon we may need them here to fight at home for their own land.**
>
> **"Keep the war popular. Protect our own country. Give generously, but give wisely to those whom we seek so earnestly to aid. Give France what she wants when it is so easy to send the willing Roosevelt."**

No Further Use for "T. R."

On January 1, 1918, when the Roosevelt request had long been refused, "The American" said:

> **"What most stirs Roosevelt to fits of anger when he speaks of Mr. Wilson is, of course, the recollection of the refusal to let him parade in France at the head of a volunteer division. 'The American' at the time was in favor of sending Mr. Roosevelt to France, but we realize that the refusal to send him was based upon carefully considered military policy."**

And that military policy—very, very "carefully considered" by Hearst's aid on "The Evening Journal"—was betrayed in the latter's editorial of July 16, 1917—"Roosevelt or Pershing—Which Would You Rather Follow If You Had To Go to War?"

> **"We believe . . . if the Germans had their choice they would say, 'Send us four Roosevelts and keep one Pershing home, and we'll be obliged to you.'"**

Just how much obliged to William Randolph Hearst might Germany not be at the present moment of battle in Picardy if his counsels had ruled America!

There are only two points remaining on what would have been Hearst's contribution to America's war policy if he had occupied the Presidential chair. One is positive and one is negative.

The only consistent, constructive, unhampering war measure campaign that Hearst has backed has been the building of airplanes. This he has hammered at on almost fifty occasions in his New York papers.

So far, so good.

But—what is to be said of a man who concentrates all his efforts on a weapon which he claims will defeat Germany more or less painlessly and quickly, and which turns out to be a weapon that cannot reach efficient production for a long time?

A man with such a single righteous policy is not to be judged by his claims for it. He must be judged by the amazing policies of inaction and obstruction with which he has surrounded it. He must be judged by the fact that he would have kept our army at home, our money at home, our food at home and our navy at home. And he must be judged, above all, by the fact that he would have cancelled what is unquestionably America's biggest and most vital and most successful effort toward the salvation of the Allies.

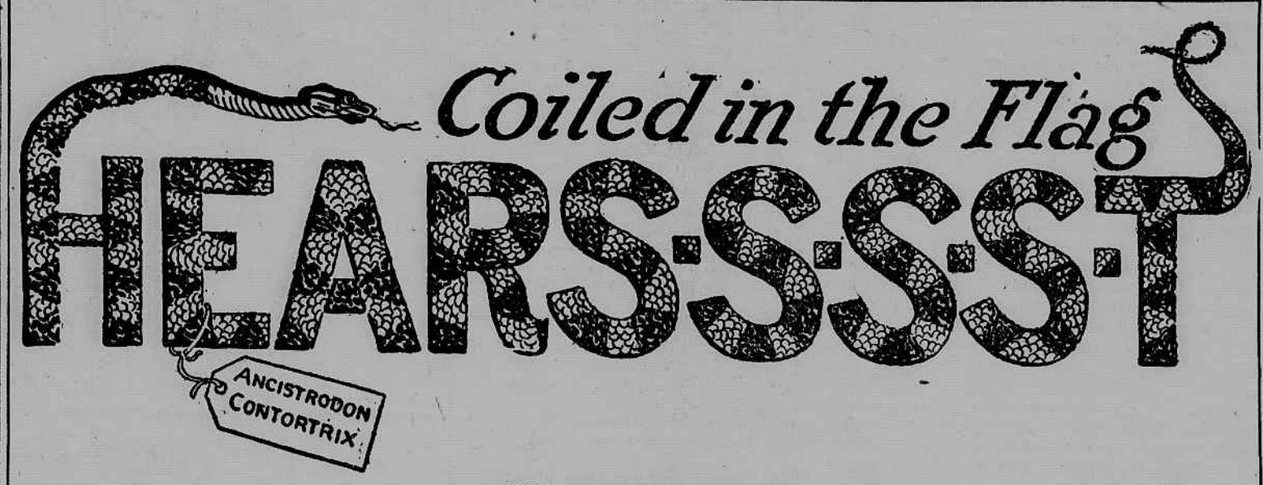
Hearst would have stopped the building of ships.

The evidence is short and simple. It was presented in "The American" of June 25, 1917, during the fight over wooden versus steel ships. Hearst, standing against both policies of rapid and extensive merchant shipbuilding, said through his editorial mouthpiece:

> **"It is founded upon one of the most absurd propositions that was ever projected into any sort of warfare, much less the most titanic warfare that the world has ever known. It is planted upon the principle of fighting an enemy by furnishing material to his most destructive department faster than it can destroy—to feed the remorseless maw of the German submarine."**

It is worthy of note that this editorial of obstruction ends with the words:

"AMERICA FIRST!"



NEWSPAPERS

The New York American
The New York Evening Journal
The Chicago Herald and Examiner
The Chicago American
The Boston Advertiser
The Boston American
The Atlanta Georgian
The Atlanta American
The San Francisco Examiner
The Los Angeles Examiner
The New York Deutsches Journal (discontinued April 21, 1918)

MAGAZINES

The Cosmopolitan
Good Housekeeping
Harper's Bazar
Hearst's
Motor
Motor Boating
Puck

From figures given in N. W. Ayer & Son's American Newspaper Annual and Directory for 1917, the total average daily circulation of the Hearst newspapers is 2,572,885; the total average circulation per issue of the Hearst magazines is 2,281,627.

Next Week—Sowing Distrust of the Allies